

## **23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Garden Tour: Maximizing Small Spaces**

By Rebecca Miller-Cripps

On Sunday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County will host their twenty-third annual garden tour. This year's theme, "Gardening with Purpose," offers glimpses into five gardens on the self-guided tour from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The Master Gardener Demonstration Garden will feature a plant sale, highlighting some of the plants found in private gardens on the tour. Plants available for purchase have all been locally grown and are suitable for planting in the foothills area.

Today, let's take a peek into some of the gardens on the tour, whetting your appetite for the full tour on Sunday, October 14. Sonora Hills is the location for two of the tour sites, chosen to demonstrate creative ideas for making the most of small spaces.

Carol and Bob Rogers have created a garden that, according to the master gardener site captain for their location, is a "work of art." Garden sculpture, bird baths, container plants, succulents and trailing vegetation add layers of interest. Their garden packs delightful surprises into a small space.

The Rogers utilize vertical gardening to grow up rather than out. They have built a "high-rise" five foot tall strawberry garden that is still bearing strawberries; its height maximizes sunlight while keeping snails out. Carol also notes that irrigation water supplied to taller gardens drains through to plants on lower levels, thus doing double irrigation duty and conserving water.

Of special interest is a newly-created meditation garden under a Japanese maple. A long, cool, shady walk leads to the quiet spot. Another favorite is a large Sego palm in a pot that has moved with the Rogers for the past twenty years. And be sure to look for the California mission sitting on a tree stump. The mission is filled with flowers and mosses. In past years it has been home to frogs, while this year a praying mantis has taken up residence. Birds have helped landscape the mission, dropping seeds that produce surprise plants, including a 6" tall unknown tree that is currently growing there.

The Rogers garden is not only creative and soothing, it produces food as well. There are three beds dedicated to what Carol describes as "lots of vegetables and herbs."

The O'Gorman garden started from nothing—just "dirt and weeds"—in the back yard. As the O'Gormans developed their landscaping, they worked around the existing cedar, olive and maple trees. The end result is a winning combination of plants and outdoor living spaces—three major areas that they created for their personal enjoyment. There are now fruit trees (apples and cherry), several seating areas, a deck, river rock and stone pathways. According to Kathy O'Gorman, they "eat breakfast under the fruit trees, eat lunch in another seating area and have dinner on the deck."

The O'Gorman garden focuses on texture and color. Interesting plants offer variation in leaf shape and flower color, from *Phlomis fruticosa* (Jerusalem sage) to dusty miller and daylilies.

Hardscape textures vary from the river rock around planting areas to stepping stones in gravel pathways.

Tickets for the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual tour are available in Columbia at Columbia Mercantile; in Sonora at Antiques, Etc. and the UCCE Office located at 52 North Washington Street, in Standard at Nature's Whole Food Depot, and The Nest in Twain Harte. Tickets will be available the day of the tour at the UCCE Demonstration Garden located at 251 South Barretta Street, Sonora. Tickets are also available from your favorite Master Gardener and on-line at <http://ucanr.edu/tuolumnegardentourtickets>

Come out and join us for an enjoyable day spent touring gardens in the Mother Lode.

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*UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne County can answer home gardening questions. Call 209-533-5912 or go to: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=7269> to fill out our easy-to-use problem questionnaire. Check out our website at: [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master\\_Gardeners/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/) You can also find us on Facebook, or pick up the local Master Gardener book "Sharing the Knowledge: Gardening in the Mother Lode" at Mountain Books or the UCCE Office both in Sonora, CA.*